



April, 2004
Volume 1,

Dates to remember:

- European Delegates meeting (Brussels): 26-27/6/2004
- Global Delegates meeting (Adelaide): 29/9-1/10/2004
- Global Conference (Adelaide): 2-5/10/2004
- SWAD: 9/11/2004
- European Regional

Inside pages:

- Social Work Action Day
- Partnerships
- Brussels and Strasbourg updates
- Social Platform
- National news

EUROPEAN SOCIAL WORKER

International Federation of Social Workers – European Region europa@ifsw.org

More progress on the path to influence in Europe Executive plans the way forward for work with the European Union Report from Executive Committee - Brussels - 19-20 March 2004

IFSW Europe has made more progress towards its goal of giving social workers an influential voice in Europe. The European Executive, meeting in Brussels on 19 and 20 March 2004, approved priorities for work with the European Union and received reports from Nicolai Paulsen [Denmark] on work with the European Union and Hansjörg Keller [Switzerland] with the Council of Europe. The Executive approved an outline work programme for the Council of Europe in October 2003 and for the European Union at this meeting in Brussels.



IFSW Europe Executive Committee Members in Copenhagen May 2003
Monica Egan [Treasurer], Brian Auslander [Communications], David N Jones [President], Ana Radulescu [Secretary], Nicolai Paulsen [EU], Hansjörg Keller [Council of Europe] and Antonina Dashkina

DELEGATES MEETING – 26-27 June 2004

DELEGATES MEETING – 26 June from 14.00 until 27 June 18:00

The Delegates Meeting will be held in June at the Ibis Hotel Gare du Midi in Brussels, Belgium.

The timing of the meeting is decided by the date of the global General Meeting, which takes place in Adelaide, Australia 29 September - 1 October 2004.

See the timetable on page 7.

Executive elections to be held in June

Two places on the European Executive are open for election in June. Information about the election process has been sent to member organisations—so act NOW! The last day to submit your nominations, if you want them to be sent to all member organisations in advance, is May 21. It is also possible to make nominations at the Delegates' Meeting in June. The retiring members, Brian Auslander [Israel] and Antonina Dashkina [Russia] are both eligible for re-election.

It will also be necessary to elect two

deputies to the executive. The current deputies are Malamo Neophytou [Cyprus] and Georg Dimitz [Austria] and both are eligible for re-election.

There is one vacant place on the **European Union Permanent Committee**. This Committee is appointed by the Executive. The closing date is 27 June 2004 – at the end of the Delegates Meeting. The current members are Nicolai Paulsen [Denmark] and Georg Dimitz [Austria].

ROSE WORKSHOP FOR DELEGATES

“THE ROLE OF SOCIAL WORKERS IN EUROPE”

There will be a workshop, at the Delegates Meeting in June, on the role of social workers in modern day Europe.

This continues the work on the changing role of social workers which started at the Delegates' Meeting in Bratislava in 1999 and has been discussed at each Delegate's Meeting since then. This will give an opportunity for member organisations to share their practical

experience of dealing with the changes in the role of social work and to prepare for decisions about the IFSW strategy which will follow in the Delegates' Meeting later.

All member organisations are asked to prepare for this workshop and to bring examples of 3 challenges, 3 actions and 1 strategy they have used to face up to this challenge

How do member organizations improve the profile of social workers in challenging circumstances?

What strategy should IFSW adopt to support this?

EUROPEAN UNION

Nicolai Paulsen [Denmark], Chair of the Permanent Committee on the European Union, and Georg Dimitz [Austria] have been researching the current work programme of the EU and key contact points for IFSW in the Commission. It will not be possible for IFSW to cover all our areas of interest on our own – the size of the agenda is

too large! We have therefore been exploring possible partners for our lobbying [see below].

The Executive in Brussels agreed an IFSW Europe EU work plan for the coming months. This will be available on the IFSW Europe website soon.

SOCIAL PLATFORM

David N Jones [IFSW Europe President] and Nicolai Paulsen have held a meeting with Simon Wilson, the Director of the Platform of European Social NGOs, at their offices in Brussels.

Social Platform was established in 1995 and brings together nearly 40 European non-governmental organisations, federations and networks working to build an

inclusive society and to promote the social dimensions of the European Union. The group includes a number of organisations led by service users.

Simon Wilson and David Jones agreed that the two organisations will work closely together over the coming months and explore whether IFSW should become a formal member of the Platform.

www.socialplatform.org

COUNCIL OF EUROPE

The IFSW Council of Europe team attended the annual meeting of NGOs [non-governmental organisations] at the Council of Europe in Strasbourg in January 2004.

The team included Gabrielle Stark-Angemeier [Germany] [Representative to the Council of Europe], Hansjörg Keller [Executive member], Marie-Therese Paillusson

[France - retiring representative] and Anita Diethelm [Switzerland]. IFSW is working closely with Answin Weissenborn [Austria], the EASSW Representative. The meeting was attended by around 200 people and included discussion groups and meetings with Council of Europe officials.

We would welcome people from Luxemburg, and France to join the team.

EUROPEAN UNION

Mutual recognition of qualifications – decisions of the European Parliament, and next is the Council

EU has been preparing a *Directive on recognition of professional qualifications* for some years, BUT it has now reached a final stage and seems to be finalized during 2004. The Parliament did in February vote to approve the proposal with a number of amendments, and the Council of the European Union will discuss a revised draft in June.

The Directive aims at simplifying the rules relating to professional

qualifications and applies to all nationals of a Member State wishing to practice in another EU State.

Does this make it easier for Social Workers to obtain a job in another EU State? Probably, the issue that has not been solved yet is who will be on the list of regulated professions.

The regulation will differ for those professions who are regulated and those who are not. Social Work is regulated in some countries and in some not.

What should IFSW do?

The task for IFSW National member organizations is to consult their National Government on the issue,

e.g. to secure (where it is possible) that they include social workers on the list of regulated professions.

The challenges for IFSW Europe will be to establish an overview of which countries identify social workers as a regulated profession and prepare for a formal EU-recognized common platform for the profession, as such an IFSW-based professional platform may facilitate the mutual recognition (according to the proposal).

SERVICES OF GENERAL INTEREST

The responses to the Commission consultation are now available on the Commission website in all Community languages.
http://europa.eu.int/comm/secretariat_general/services_general_interest/comments/public_en.htm

More information is available on the Social Platform website.
<http://www.socialplatform.org/code/en/hp.asp>

On 21 May 2003, the Commission adopted a Green Paper on services of general interest. The Commission's aim was to stimulate a discussion about high-quality public services in the European Union and on the way they are organised, financed and evaluated. There are many differences between member states about how these services are organised and described, reflecting different historical, economic, cultural and political developments. This has led to confusion and misunderstandings. The way the papers are written often does not help understanding! What do these words mean? The term «*services of general interest*» cannot be found in the Treaty itself. It is taken from the term «*services of general economic interest*», which **is** used in the Treaty. It is broader than the term «*services of general economic interest*» and covers both market and non-market services which the public

authorities class as being of general interest and subject to specific public service obligations. This can include many services provided by local councils and other elected bodies. The concept of «*services of general economic interest*» thus covers in particular certain services provided by the big network industries such as transport, postal services, energy and communications. However, the term also extends to any other economic activity subject to public service obligations. This could well include social work services, especially if provided by charitable, not-for-profit or private organizations. It is important to remember that, under Community law, public and private providers of services of general interest are subject to the same rights and obligations, so the proposed regulations could force local councils to change the way they organize services, like social work. There are similar developments taking

place at the global level within the World Trade Organisation structures. The Green Paper was discussed when IFSW met Social Platform in Brussels in March [see article in this issue of ESW]. IFSW Europe will be getting more information about these developments before the Delegates Meeting in June 2004. We would welcome information from member organisations about any developments in their countries. If anybody wishes to do some work on this important subject or if you have information, please write to Nicolai Paulsen.

PARTNERSHIPS

The European Schools [EASSW] and IFSW, FESET and AEIJI have agreed to work towards signing a memorandum of partnership by the Cyprus conference in 2005. A joint statement on the recent joint meeting in Spain is on the website.

SOCIAL WORK ACTION DAY 2004

Violence and trafficking

Social Workers against Exploitation

Member organizations had been asked to choose the subject for SWAD 2004. Thanks to everybody for an excellent response with around 20 replies. However they were almost equally divided between the two suggested themes:

- Trafficking in people
- Changing role of social workers

Some organizations suggested alternative subjects related to these themes.

Monica Vyslouzil [Austria] had prepared a paper on a possible programme for future work on the changing role of social workers. Monica had led the highly influential IFSW Social Inclusion Project in 1999 and wrote the final report. A number

of the recommendations in that report are very relevant to the debate on the changing role and could help in planning Social Work Action Day.

The Executive decided that the theme for 2004 should focus on exploitation in various forms, including trafficking and violence. National member organizations can also choose a form of exploitation which is appropriate in their own country.

Herbert Paulischin [Austria] is leading this work. Hansjörg Keller [Switzerland] from the Executive will accompany this work.

SOCIAL WORK ACTION DAY 2005

Role of Social Workers in Europe

The Delegates' Meeting will be asked to approve the theme for SWAD 2005 when we meet in Brussels in June and build on our work on the role of social workers. This will build on the workshop in June and further work to be planned.

ROLE OF SOCIAL WORKERS IN EUROPE

The Executive had a long and thoughtful discussion about the way forward with this work, helped by a paper from Monica Vyslouzil [see above].

We agreed that the core role of social work, its principles and values, has not changed but that there have been big changes in most countries in the context for that work and the way that people are expected to work in public organizations.

We need to develop a map of these changes and for the future we plan to publish an annual report on the state of social work in Europe. We can do this with our partners, including contact with service user organizations.

We will invite discussion of this at our meeting in Brussels in June.

Social work in Malta – the latest events

Holger Saliba, International Secretary

The Maltese Association of Social Workers celebrated its 10th anniversary last January with a special dinner where Maltese social work pioneers and others were invited. For many invitees, it was a unique and an unforgettable occasion. For this occasion, the MASW published a booklet to commemorate this event. In this booklet a brief history of social work in Malta (1957 – 2003) was outlined. This 10th anniversary celebration happened to coincide with another important event in the history of social work in Malta – in November 2003, the Social Work Profession Act was approved by the Maltese Parliament. Thus social work has got the legal recognition as a profession. This was an achievement which the Maltese Association of Social Workers actively contributed and struggled for.

The Social Work Profession Act stipulates the minimum requirements for any person to be considered as a professional social worker. One cannot become a registered social worker unless s/he has practiced social work at least for two years, under supervision. Furthermore, a B. A. (Hons) degree is the minimum requirement, not excluding those who in the past obtained diploma in social work or any other equivalent qualification.

The Social Work Profession Act established the Malta Social Work Profession Board which will consist of seven members, including qualified and experienced social workers from the public and non-governmental sector. The Board is to process applications for warrants and if satisfied it shall recommend to the Minister for Social Policy to

grant that warrant. The Board may also establish, and where necessary, assess existing social work standards and develop new continuing social work professional development and other standards. In March 2004, the Maltese Association of Social Workers held elections to choose two members to be part of this Board. The Social Work Profession Act will become *in vigore* (in action) once this Board is functional.

The Social Work Profession Act marked a significant milestone not solely for social workers themselves but for the service users who seek professional help. It is important to point out that the warrant is not permanent but subject to renewal. The reality of renewable warrants urges social workers to practice in a professional way and to seek further training in order to continually upgrade their practice.

STUDENT NETWORK

There is funding for the network but problems in building a database and keeping in touch with interested people. The President invites students and newly qualified social workers to contact her at aura.seikkula@cc.jyu.fi

Eileen McGowan Kelly scholarship awarded to Malta social worker

The Eileen McGowan Kelly Scholarship Fund Committee has decided to give this year's award to **Ms. Christina Galea Curmi Borg from Malta.**

Christina is a 36 year old social worker from Mellieha on the small island of Malta in the Mediterranean. For the past five years she has chaired the Maltese Association of Social Workers (MASW). For the Scholarship Committee the commitment to the social work profession and the organisation that supports the profession were paramount. Over years Christina Borg has volunteered her time to make

MASW flourish and to grow the profession. With her efforts and those of others in the Malta Association of Social Workers they were successful in promoting the enactment of the Social Work Profession Act which formally and legally established social work as a profession in Malta. Under her leadership the Association lobbied for and were successful at establishing a Family Court and the appointment of a Commissioner for Children.

In the time that Malta Association of Social Workers has been a member of IFSW (soon 10 years) they have never been able to attend an international meeting, and yet they are doing and

have done some very good work in their country. Small countries usually have less resources and the demand on individuals who are trying to bring around change can be enormous at the personal and professional level. Christina Borg graduated from the University of Malta in 1991. She has used her education as social worker both in Malta and in Newfoundland, Canada, where she spent a couple of years - and she speaks Maltese, English, Italian, French and Spanish. We congratulate Christina Borg for the Award and are looking forward to seeing her in Adelaide.

International Federation of Social Workers

ESW Correspondents:

Brian Auslander – coordinator
Kristiina Koskiluoma
Roland Fuerst
Svetlana Petkova
Marie-Genieve Mounier
Barbara Molderings
Racel Erikson
John Brennan
Zane Lasmane
Jesmond Schembri
Jorunn Vindegg
Piotr Biernacki
Cristina Martins
Lucien Polese
Sergey Tetersky
Paula Barros
Yvonne Ahlstroem
Titti Fraenkel
Veli Duyan
Serge Paul
Ruth Stark
Irina Zvereva

We're on the Web!

See us at:

www.ifsw.org

EUROPEAN SOCIAL WORKER

European Social Worker should become a significant source of information about the state of social work in Europe, the Executive concluded. However member organizations are not using it for this purpose - there is a need to develop the newsletter and encourage people to use it. For this issue we finally received a substantial number of articles at the very end, after making a final appeal. **We will publish another issue very soon to include those articles that arrived toward the deadline.** Even so, there are

many organizations that did not send anything. I am sure that **everyone** can write a few words twice a year. The international news is full of stories about the disastrous state of welfare and social services in many of our member countries. Many of us are coping with the same issues.

A meeting of ESW correspondents will be held during the delegates meeting to help identify what is needed and try to improve our newsletter.

European Social Worker is a newsletter and NOT an academic journal.

**We NEED short news items from each country.
We do NOT want long articles.
ESW correspondents are the most important links in this chain.**

DEVELOPMENT OF IFSW EUROPE

The Executive agreed that there is a need to have costing for a paid secretariat but that it is unlikely that sufficient money will be found in the near future. The Executive will therefore take a report to the Delegates' Meeting proposing that we strengthen our capacity to be influential in Europe by

forming alliances with key partner organizations, working closely with umbrella groups like Social Platform and developing our funding to support travel for the Executive and representatives to European institutions. This strategy is already being put in place.

IFSW EUROPEAN REGION - DELEGATE MEETING COUNTDOWN Ibis Hotel Gare du Midi 26-27 June 2004

Member organizations need to start thinking now about agenda items they wish to raise at the Delegates Meeting in June and nominations for the different elections which will take place.

The timetable is as follows:

April Proposals for the agenda

April book hotel rooms in Brussels

21 May, Nominations for Executive

12 June Distribution of final agenda

26-27 June Delegates Meeting & workshop

50 rooms are reserved in the hotel which is in the centre of Brussels and at a very good price. Rooms not taken will be given back 2 weeks before the meeting. Member organizations must book their rooms in good time if they wish to stay in the hotel. Watch for information from the Secretariat.

We will invite a speaker from the European Commission and welcome partners.